

## IBN BAJJA

## The Governance of the Solitary

Translated by Lawrence Berman

Ibn Bājja or Avempace (Latin) (Abū Bakr Muḥammad Ibn Bājja [or Ibn al-Šā'igh], ca. 1085–1138) was born in Saragossa toward the end of the eleventh century, lived in Seville, Granada, and later in North Africa (where he seems to have enjoyed a favored position at the Almoravid court), and died in Fez. A striking feature of his life and thought is that, though the *Governance of the Solitary* would seem to recommend withdrawal from political affairs in imperfect regimes, Ibn Bajja spent much of his life in public service.<sup>1</sup> While in Saragossa, he is thought to have been the vizier to Abū Bakr Ibn Ibrāhīm al-Šaḥrāwī (known as Ibn Tifalwīt) from ca. 1110 to 1117. And he is believed to have been appointed vizier, probably of Seville, for roughly twenty years, by Yaḥyā Ibn Abī Bakr, grandson of the founder of the Almoravids, Yūsuf Ibn Tāshfīn. To add to the complexity of Ibn Bajja's character and actions, all evidence indicates that he, like Avicenna before him, led a relatively dissolute life. He is celebrated as the first Spanish-Muslim philosopher and is credited with extensive knowledge of medicine, mathematics, astronomy, poetry, and music. Most of his surviving works are

short treatises, many of which are incomplete and do not appear to have been properly revised by the author.

The *Governance of the Solitary* is noteworthy for having the character and position of the philosopher in the imperfect cities as its central theme. This theme, in a sense, complements Alfarabi's discussion of the solitary individuals (or Weeds) in the virtuous city in his *Political Regime* (above, selection 3). "Abū Bakr Ibn al-Šā'igh sought to establish a way for the 'Governance of the Solitary' in these lands," says Averroes, "but this book is incomplete, and besides, it is not always easy to understand its meaning.... He is the only one to treat this subject, and none of his predecessors surpassed him in this respect." The central theme of the work is interwoven with another theme, that of "spiritual" or incorporeal "forms." Only such parts as treat the main theme are given here.

Moses Narboni made a Hebrew paraphrase of the book in his commentary on Ibn Tufayl's *Hayy the Son of Yaqzan*, composed in 1349. This paraphrase was published by David Herzog: *Die Abhandlung des Abu Bekr Ibn al-Saig "Vom Verhalten*

1. For a perceptive and thought-provoking analysis of Ibn Bajja and his work, readers should consult Steven Harvey, "The Place of the Philosopher in the City according to Ibn Bājja," in *The*

*Political Aspects of Islamic Philosophy: Essays in Honor of Muhsin S. Mahdi*, ed. Charles E. Butterworth (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 199–233.

*des Einsiedlers*” nach Mose Narbonis Auszug (Berlin, 1896). The first edition of the Arabic text was published by Miguel Asín Palacios: *Tadbīr al-mutawahhīd* (Madrid and Granada, 1946). At about the same time, D. M. Dunlop published the first two chapters of the text: “Ibn Bājjah’s Tadbīr al-Mutawahhīd (Rule of the Solitary),” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1945, 63–73 (corresponding to Asín Palacios’s ed., 3–17). Both editions are based on the same manuscript (Bodleian, Pococke, No. 206) and present numerous difficulties, some of which are no doubt due to the unfinished character of the work as left by Ibn Bajja. Majid Fakhry published another edition based on the same MS

in his *Opera Metaphysica* of Ibn Bājjah (Beirut: Dār al-Nahār, 1968), 35–96. And Ma’an Ziyādah published another edition (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1978), which includes notes on the divergent readings of the previous editions based on this same single MS. As Dunlop explains in his *Encyclopaedia of Islam* entry for Ibn Bajja, new ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 3:728–29, several other manuscripts are known to exist, though they have been lost track of. Until additional manuscripts are found and collated, Palacios’s edition remains trustworthy, as does Berman’s translation. This translation is based on Palacios’s edition, pp. 3–12, 37, 54–55, 58–62, 78–79. The bracketed page numbers refer to the Palacios edition.

## CHAPTER 1

1. The word “governance” (*tadbīr*) is used in Arabic in many senses, enumerated by the experts in that language. Most commonly, it is used to signify, in a general way, the ordering of actions to an end that is being pursued. Therefore they do not apply it to someone who performs a single action with a view to accomplishing a particular end: one does not call an activity “governance” if he believes that it consists of a single action; whereas the one who believes that the activity consists of many actions and considers it inasmuch as it possesses an order, he then calls that order a governance. (For this reason, they say of God that He is the “governor” of the world.) This [order] may be potential or actual; but the more frequent use of the word “governance” signifies the potential [order].

It is evident that when certain affairs are ordered potentially, they are so ordered by means of calculation; for this [kind of order] pertains to calculation and can exist through calculation alone. Therefore [4] it can exist in man alone, and the use of “governor” [cited above] is merely analogical. Hence governance is used in a primary and a derivative sense.<sup>2</sup> Governance may also designate the bringing of this [potential] order into being and insofar as order is on its way into being, which is more frequent and apparent in human action, less so in the actions of the irrational animal.

Applied in this manner, governance has a general and a restricted sense. Used in a general sense, it designates all human activities of whatever kind. It is applied to the crafts as well as to the faculties, except that it is more frequent and common to apply it [in the restricted sense] to the faculties. Therefore it is applied to the ordering of military affairs and hardly ever to the arts of shoemaking and weaving. When applied in this [restricted] manner, again it has a general and a restricted sense. Used in a general sense, it designates all that is covered by the arts called “faculties.” And they have been summarized in political science.<sup>3</sup> Used in a restrictive sense, it designates the governance of cities.

Governance is applied to matters some of which are prior to others in dignity and perfection. Of these, the most dignified are the governance of cities and the governance of the household. But governance is seldom applied to the household, to the extent that the expression “governance of the household” is used in a metaphorical and qualified sense. As for the governance of war (*ḥarb*) and so forth, they form parts of these two kinds of governance. As for God’s governance of the world, this is certainly governance of a different kind, only distantly related to even that meaning of the word [that is, the one referring to the city], which resembles<sup>4</sup>

2. Literally, “is said in [in accordance with an order of] priority and posteriority.”

3. The translation of this sentence, suggested by Charles E. Butterworth, replaces Berman’s translation, especially his interpolation

“I have given an account of this in [my work(s) on] political science.”

4. With Dunlop.

it most closely. The latter is governance in the unqualified sense. It is also the most dignified, for it receives the designation [5] "governance" because of the supposed similarity between it and bringing the world into existence by God, the Exalted.

It is evident that this class of ambiguous nouns [to which "governance" belongs] is the farthest removed from univocity; it is almost completely equivocal. The multitude uses it ambiguously. The philosophers use it with complete equivocity; they consider it ambiguous only in the sense in which we give A the name of B because A contains something that is similar to B—a class of which they did not give an account in [their discussions of] ambiguous nouns because of its rarity. Therefore the multitude does not use the adjective "right" in connection with God's governance [of the world] and does not say of the governance of the world that it is "right" governance. Instead it says that it is "perfect," "precise," and the like, because these expressions imply the presence of rightness and some other dignified thing in addition. For in the eyes of the multitude, right activity is like a species of perfect and precise activity. The account of this matter is presented elsewhere.

2. When governance is used in an unqualified sense, as we have used it above, to designate<sup>5</sup> the governance of cities, and when used in a restricted sense [to designate the governance of the household], it is divided into right and wrong governance. It is sometimes supposed that governance may be free of these two opposite [qualifications], but investigation and close study will reveal that they adhere to it necessarily. This can be ascertained easily by anyone with a minimal understanding of political philosophy. Therefore the two types of governance properly so called can be divided into right and wrong governance.

As far as the governance of cities is concerned, Plato has explained it in the *Republic*. He explained [6] what is meant by the right governance of cities and the source of the wrongness that adheres to it. To trouble oneself with the task of dealing with something that has been adequately dealt with before is superfluous, a result of ignorance, or a sign of evil intent.

As for the governance of the household, the household as household is a part of the city. He [Plato] explained there that man alone forms the natural household [of which he spoke]. He explained that the most excellent existence of that which is a part is to exist as a part. Therefore he did not formulate the governance of the household as a [separate] part of the political art, since it is treated by him within the political art. He explained there what the household is and how it exists, that<sup>6</sup> it exists most excellently when the [city conducts a] common household, and he describes its communal character.

As for the household existing in cities other than the virtuous—that is, in the four [imperfect] cities enumerated [in the *Republic*]<sup>7</sup>—the household exists in them imperfectly, and there is something unnatural in it. Only that household is perfect to which nothing can be added without resulting in an imperfection, like the sixth finger; for the distinguishing feature of what is well constructed is that it becomes imperfect by adding to it. All other households are imperfect and diseased in comparison with the [natural] household, for the conditions that differentiate them from the virtuous household lead to the destruction of the household and its ruin. Therefore these conditions are like a disease. Certain authors have gone to the trouble of treating the governance of these imperfect—that is, the diseased—households. Those of them whose books on the governance of the household have reached us employ rhetorical arguments. In contrast, the position we stated is clear: except for the virtuous household, the households are diseased; they are all corrupt; and they do not exist by nature but only by convention. Therefore whatever virtue they may possess, [7] is by convention too, except perhaps so far as they have something in common with the virtuous household. The virtuous household can be treated following a fixed and necessary order of exposition. Understand,<sup>8</sup> then, that the treatment of that common element can be scientific as well, for no household is without many of the common features that are to be found in the virtuous household. For without them a household cannot endure or even be a household except equivocally. Let us, then, turn aside and leave the treatment of

5. Reading [wa-]dall.

6. Reading wa-inn for fa'inn (indeed).

7. That is, timocracy, oligarchy, democracy, and tyranny. See Plato *Republic* 8 and 9.

8. With Dunlop.



imperfect households to those who devote themselves to the treatment of such matters as exist at particular times.

Moreover, the perfection of the household is not something desired for its own sake, but only for the sake of rendering perfect either the city or the natural end of man; and the treatment of the latter clearly forms part of man's governance of himself [that is, ethics]. In any case, the household is either a part of the city and its treatment forms part of the treatment of the city, or a preparation for another end and its treatment forms part of the treatment of that end. This explains why the treatment of the household in the popular manner is pointless and does not constitute a science. If it has any advantage, then this is only temporary, as is the case with what the rhetoricians present in their works on "manners" (which they call psychological), such as *Kalila and Dimna* and the *Book of Arab Sages*, which contain maxims and sayings of counsel. For the most part, this topic is treated in certain sections of a book, such as in the chapters<sup>9</sup> dealing with the companionship of the sultan, the social relations with friends, and the like. In the majority of cases, these things are true<sup>10</sup> for a particular time and a particular [8] way of life. When that way of life changes,<sup>11</sup> those opinions—expressed as universal statements—change;<sup>12</sup> their application becomes restricted after having been universal; they become harmful or rejected after having been useful. You will understand this if you acquaint yourself with the contents of the books composed on this topic and try to apply what is said in each case to later times.

3. The virtuous city is characterized by the absence of the art of medicine and of the art of judication (*ṣinā'at al-qaḍā'*).<sup>13</sup> For friendship binds all its citizens, and they do not quarrel among themselves at all. Therefore it is only when a part of the city is bereft of friendship and quarrelsomeness breaks out that recourse must be had to the laying down of justice and the need arises for someone, who is the judge, to dispense it. Moreover, since all the actions of the virtuous city are right—this being the distinguishing characteristic

that adheres to it—its citizens do not eat harmful foods. Therefore they do not need to know about the cures for the suffocation caused by mushrooms and the like, nor do they need to know about the treatment for excessive wine-drinking, for nothing there is not properly ordered. When the citizens forego exercise, this too, gives rise to numerous diseases; but it is evident that the virtuous city is not subject to such diseases. It may not even need any remedies aside from those for dislocation and the like, and, in general, for such diseases whose specific causes are external and that the healthy body cannot ward off by its own effort. For it has been observed in many a healthy man that his serious wounds heal [9] by themselves, and there are other kinds of evidence for this. It is, then, characteristic of the perfect city that there is neither doctor nor judge, while it is inherent in the four [imperfect simple regimes or] unmixed<sup>14</sup> cities that they are in need of doctor and judge. The more removed a city is from the perfect, the more it is in need of these two and the more dignified the station of these two types of men in it.

It is evident that in the virtuous and perfect city, every man is offered the highest excellence he is fit to pursue. All of its opinions are true and there is no false opinion in it. Its actions alone are virtuous without qualification. When any other action is virtuous, it is so only in relation to some existing evil. For instance, the amputation of a limb from the body is harmful in itself, but, by accident, it may prove beneficial to someone who has been bitten by a snake and whose body achieves health by that amputation. Similarly, scammony is harmful in itself, but it is beneficial to someone with a disease. An account of these matters is given in the *Nicomachea*.<sup>15</sup>

It is, then, evident that every opinion arising in the perfect city that is different from the opinions of its citizens is false, and every action arising in it that is different from the actions customarily performed in it is wrong. Now the false does not have a defined nature and cannot be known at all; this is explained in the *Book of Demonstration*.<sup>16</sup>

9. With Dunlop.

10. With Dunlop.

11. With Dunlop.

12. With Dunlop.

13. The difference between this art of judication and the art of jurisprudence (*fiqh*), as the latter is discussed by Alfarabi in the *Enumeration of the Sciences* and *Book of Religion*, is that the former is the activity of the jurisconsult or judge, and the latter is

the activity of the jurispudent. In Shlomo Pines's translation of the *Guide of the Perplexed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), jurisprudence (*fiqh*) is helpfully, if somewhat repetitively, rendered as the "legalistic science of the Law." Compare the following paragraph with Plato *Republic* 405A ff.

14. See above, note 7.

15. Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 1138b1 and 7.5 ff. passim.

16. Aristotle *Posterior Analytics* 1.16 passim.

As to the wrong action, it may be performed in order to achieve some other end. There are books composed to enable one to study these actions, such as the *Book of Devices* by the Banū Shākir.<sup>17</sup> But everything contained in them has the nature of play—things intended to excite rather than to contribute [10] to the essential perfection of man. To discuss such things is a sign of evil intent and results from ignorance.

In the perfect city, therefore, one does not introduce arguments dealing with those who hold an opinion other than that of its citizens or perform an action other than their action. In the four [imperfect] cities, on the other hand, this can be done. For here, there may be an unknown<sup>18</sup> action that a man discovers by nature or learns from someone else, and does it. Or there may be a false opinion, and some man becomes aware of its falsehood. Or there may be erroneous sciences in all or most of which the citizens do not believe because they involve accepting<sup>19</sup> contradictory positions; and, by nature or instruction, a man may find which of the two contradictory propositions is the true one.

Now the ones who discover a right action or learn a true science that does not exist in the city belong to a class that has no generic name. As for the ones who stumble upon a true opinion that does not exist in the city or the opposite of which is believed in the city, they are called Weeds.<sup>20</sup> The more such opinions they hold and the more crucial the opinions, the more appropriate the appellation. Strictly speaking, the term applies to these men alone. But it may be applied, more generally, to anyone who holds an opinion other than the opinion of the citizens of the city, regardless of whether his opinion is true or false. The name has been transferred to these men from the weeds that spring up of themselves among plants. But let us restrict the use of this term to the ones who hold true opinions. It is evident that one of the characteristics of the perfect city is that it is free of Weeds [in both its strict and more general senses]; in the strict sense, because it is free of false opinions; and in the general sense, because their presence means that the city is already diseased and disintegrating and has ceased to be [11] perfect. The Weeds can, however, exist in the four [imperfect] ways of life.

Their existence is the cause that leads to the rise of the perfect city, as explained elsewhere.<sup>21</sup>

All the ways of life that exist now or have existed before (according to the great majority of the reports reaching us about them, with the possible exception of what Abū Naṣr [Alfarabi] narrates concerning the early Persians' way of life) are mixtures of the five ways of life [that is, the perfect and the four imperfect ones], and for the most part we find them to be mixtures of the four [imperfect] ways of life. We leave it to those who devote themselves to the investigation of the ways of life that exist in this time to supply the details. We merely remark that the three types of men—the Weeds, the judges, and the doctors—exist or can exist, in these ways of life. The happy, were it possible for them to exist in these cities, will possess only the happiness of an isolated individual; and the only right governance [possible in these cities] is the governance of an isolated individual, regardless of whether there is one isolated individual or more than one, so long as a nation or a city has not adopted their opinion. These individuals are the ones meant by the Sufis when they speak of the “strangers”; for although they are in their homelands and among their companions and neighbors, the Sufis say that these are strangers in their opinions, having traveled in their minds to other stations that are like homelands to them, and so forth.

We intend to discourse here about the governance of this solitary man. It is evident that he suffers from something that is unnatural. We will therefore state how he should manage himself so that he may achieve the best existence proper to him, just as the doctor states how the isolated man in these cities should manage himself in order to be healthy: that is, either how to preserve his health (for instance, [12] what Galen writes in his *Preservation of Health*), or how to recover it once it is lost, which is laid down in the art of medicine. Similarly, this discourse is addressed to the isolated Weed: how he is to achieve happiness if he does not possess it, or how to remove from himself the conditions that prevent his achieving happiness or achieving the portion he can achieve of it, which in turn depends either on how far his insight takes him or on [a belief]

17. Ahmad, al-Hasan, and Muḥammad, the sons of Mūsā Ibn Shākir, collaborated in writing numerous works on mathematics, astronomy, and mechanics. The *Book of Devices* is attributed to Muḥammad (d. 873).

18. Reading *yujhal* for *yuhill* (permitted).

19. With Dunlop.

20. Cf. Alfarabi *Political Regime* secs. 92, 122 ff. (above, selection 3)

21. Cf., e.g., Alfarabi *Political Regime* secs. 114–15 (above, selection 3).



that had seized him. As to the preservation of his happiness, which is similar to the preservation of health, it is impossible in the three [four?] ways of life and those mixed of them; what Galen and others prescribe in this situation is similar to alchemy and astrology. What we are laying<sup>22</sup> down here is the medicine of the soul, as distinguished from the other medicine, which is the medicine of the body, and from judication, which is the medicine of social relations. It is evident that the latter two arts disappear completely in the perfect city and are, therefore, not to be reckoned among the sciences. Similarly, the subject we are treating

would disappear if the city were perfect, and so would the utility of this subject, just as would the science of medicine, the art of judication, and every other art devised to meet [the predicaments characteristic of] the imperfect [kinds of] governance. Just as the true opinions contained in medicine revert [in the perfect city] to the natural sciences,<sup>23</sup> and those contained in the art of judication to the art of politics, similarly those contained in the present subject revert to natural science<sup>24</sup> and the art of politics.



## CHAPTER 7

4. [37] Every one of these [particular spiritual forms, that is, the ones present in common sense, in the imagination, and in memory] is beloved of man by nature, and hardly a man can be found who does not have a liking for at least one of these spiritual forms. If man is a part of the city, then the city is the end that is served in all of his actions. But this obtains in the virtuous city alone. In the

other four cities and the ones mixed of them, in contrast, each citizen establishes for himself any of these spiritual forms as an end and has a predilection for the pleasures resulting from them. Hence things that are mere preparations in the virtuous city become the ends in the other cities.



## CHAPTER 12

1. [54] The ends that the solitary individual establishes<sup>25</sup> for himself are three: his corporeal form, his particular spiritual form, or his universal spiritual form [that is, his intellectual perception of the intelligible ideas]. The account of his ends when he<sup>26</sup> is a part of a lasting [that is, perfect or virtuous] city has been given in political science. As regards the ends he establishes for himself in each one of the other cities—insofar as he is a part of one of them—here, the solitary individual performs, among others, certain activities appropriate to him as he pursues any of these ends. Now these ends are pursued in the city,<sup>27</sup> and the general account of the city has been given in [55] political science. To achieve any of them, one has to use reflection, investigation, inference, and, in general, calculation; for without the use of calculation, an activity is bestial, not partaking of the human in any way beyond the fact that its object is a body

that has a human form. When, in contrast, one pursues a bestial purpose—whether this purpose can be achieved through human calculation or not<sup>28</sup>—this kind of man is not different from the beast, and there is no difference at this point whether this being possesses a human form that conceals a beast or it is a beast living in isolation. It is also evident that no city can be formed from beings that act in the bestial manner, and that they cannot at all form parts of a city. Only the solitary individual can act in this manner, and we have stated the ends of the solitary. Hence the end of the bestial man is among these three ends. However, it cannot be the universal spiritual form; for this pertains to the intellect, which achieves it through inquiry. It is, then, evident that they must be two, that is, the particular spiritual and the corporeal forms.



22. With Dunlop.

23. Ibn Bajja says “arts” and “art,” respectively. He is perhaps alluding to the arts that treat dislocation and the like; see above, p. 100.

24. With Dunlop.

25. Reading *yanšubuhā* for *yataḍamanuhā* (embraces) with Narboni. Cf. the use of “establishes,” just below.

26. Reading *wa-huwa* for *wa-hiya*.

27. Bracketing *al-fādila* (virtuous).

28. Adding *aw* before *lam*.

## CHAPTER 13

1. [58] Some men, as we stated previously, are merely concerned with their corporeal form; they are the base. Others occupy themselves only with their [particular] spiritual form; they are the high-minded and the noble. Just as the basest among the men concerned with their corporeal form would be the one who disregards his spiritual form for the sake of the corporeal and does not pay any attention to the former, so the one who possesses [59] nobility in the highest degree would be the one who disregards his corporeal form and does not pay any attention to it. However, the one who disregards his corporeal form completely, reduces his longevity; like [the basest of men] he deviates from nature; and like him he does not exist. But there are men who destroy their corporeal form, in obedience to the demands of their spiritual form. Thus Ta'abbata Sharran<sup>29</sup> says:

Our lot is either captivity to be followed by the  
favor [of manumission]

Or to shed our blood; death is preferable for the  
free.

Thus he considers death better than having to bear the favor of manumission. Others choose to kill themselves. This they do either by seeking certain death on the battlefield, as did, for example, the Marwanite<sup>30</sup> in the war (*ḥarb*) with 'Abd Allāh Ibn 'Alī Ibn al-'Abbās; he is the author of the following lines:

Life with dishonor and the dislike of death,

Both I consider evil and hard.

If there is no escape from one or the other,

Then I choose to march nobly to death.

[Or else they choose to take their life with their own hands.] Zenobia did this when 'Amr was about

to kill her: "I would rather do it with my own hands than let 'Amr kill me."<sup>31</sup> So did the queen of Egypt whose story<sup>32</sup> with Augustus is given in the histories. So also did certain peoples [60] whom Aristotle mentions when treating of the great-souled man:<sup>33</sup> they burned themselves and their city<sup>34</sup> when they became certain that their enemy was about to defeat them. All this borders on excess, except in certain situations in which the destruction of the corporeal form (but not the spiritual form) results from greatness of soul and magnanimity. This, for instance, applies to what Fāṭima the mother of al-Rabī' (and the rest of the Banū Ziyād) did when Qays Ibn Zuhayr caught up with her. She threw herself off the camel she was riding, and died.<sup>35</sup> But this is one of the special cases in which it is better to die than to live, and in which the choice of death over life is the right thing for man to do. We shall give an account of this later on.

2. There is another and lower type of the noble and the great-souled man, which forms the majority. This is the man who disregards his corporeal form for the sake of the spiritual, but does not destroy the former, either because his spiritual form does not compel him to do so, or—despite its compelling him to destroy his corporeal form—because he decides in favor of keeping it. We believe this to be what Ḥātim al-Ṭā'ī<sup>36</sup> did when he slaughtered his horse and sat hungry, not eating any of it himself or feeding any of it to his family, while his young children were convulsing with hunger. Another example is what thieves do [when they endure hardships and face danger]. However, in the former case, the purpose is to control the body and improve it, while these thieves expend<sup>37</sup> their bodies for the sake of their bodies and have a predilection for one corporeal state rather than another. In the former case—the case of Ḥātim al-Ṭā'ī and his like—no argument

29. A pre-Islamic poet.

30. The event took place in the decisive battle of the Greater Zab (in 750) in which the Abbasids, led by 'Abd (not 'Ubayd) Allāh, defeated the last Umayyad caliph, Marwān. The Umayyad (Marwanite) Yahyā Ibn Mu'āwiya refused 'Abd Allāh's offer of safety and preferred to die.

31. According to an apocryphal story (reported by al-Mas'ūdī, *Les prairies d'or*, ed. C. Barbier de Meynard and Pavet de Courteille [Paris, 1864], 3:189–96), the pre-Islamic Arab queen of Syria, Zenobia (captured by Aurelian in 272), was trapped by the Lakhmid king, 'Amr Ibn 'Adī, who was about to kill her in revenge for his maternal uncle, King Jadhima, whom she had invited to her court and treacherously murdered. Zenobia sucked at her ring, which

contained poison, while addressing 'Amr (read *bi-yad* for *yā* with al-Mas'ūdī).

32. Reading *khābaruhā* for *ḥarruhā*.

33. Cf. Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 4.3–4; *Eudemian Ethics* 3.5; *De Virtutibus et Vitiis* 3, 5; and esp. *Posterior Analytics* 97b15–25.

34. Reading *ḥaraqū anfusahum wa-madīnatahum* with Narboni.

35. The event took place during the pre-Islamic battle days of Dāḥis (second half of the sixth century).

36. Famous for his hospitality (d. ca. 605).

37. Reading *yabdḥulūn* for *yubdilūn* (change).

can be adduced for not acknowledging that the action is noble and high-minded, and the nature responsible for it is honorable, sublime, [61] and spiritual; it occupies the most sublime position, next only to that occupied by wisdom; and it must necessarily be one of the qualities of the philosophic nature, for without it the philosophic nature would be corporeal and mixed.

To achieve its highest perfection, the philosophic nature must, then, act [nobly and with greatness of soul]. Therefore, whoever prefers his corporeal existence to anything pertaining to his spiritual existence will not be able to achieve the final end. Hence no corporeal man is happy and every happy man is completely spiritual. But just as the spiritual man must perform certain corporeal acts—but not for their own sake—and perform [particular] spiritual acts for their own sake; so the philosopher must perform numerous [particular] spiritual acts—but not for their own sake—and perform all the intellectual acts for their own sake. The corporeal acts enable him to exist as a human; the [particular] spiritual acts render him nobler; and the intellectual acts render him divine and virtuous. The man of wisdom is therefore necessarily a man

who is virtuous and divine. Of every kind of activity, he takes up the best only. He shares with every class of men the best states that characterize them, but he stands alone as the one who performs the most excellent and the noblest of actions. When he achieves the final end—that is, when he intellects simple essential intellects, which are mentioned in the *Metaphysics*, *On the Soul*, and *On Sense and the Sensible*—he then becomes one of these intellects. It would be right to call him simply divine. He will be free from the mortal sensible qualities, as well as from the high [particular] spiritual qualities: [62] it will be fitting to describe him as a pure divinity.

All these qualities can be obtained by the solitary individual in the absence of the perfect city. By virtue of his two lower ranks [that is, the corporeal and the particular spiritual], he will not be a part, the end, the agent, or the preserver of this perfect city. By virtue of this third rank, he may not be a part of this perfect city, but he will nevertheless be<sup>38</sup> the end aimed at in this city. Of course, he cannot be the preserver or the agent of the perfect city while a solitary man.



## CHAPTER 17

2. [78]...It is clear from the situation of the solitary that he must not associate with those whose end is corporeal nor with those whose end is the spirituality that is adulterated with corporeality. Rather, he must associate with those who pursue the sciences. Now since those who pursue the sciences are few in some ways of life and many in others—there even being ways of life in which they do not exist at all—it follows that in some of the ways of life the solitary must keep away from men completely so far as he can, and not deal with them except in indispensable matters and to the extent to which it is indispensable for him to do so; or emigrate to the ways of life in which the sciences are pursued—if such are to be found. This does not contradict what was stated in political science and what was explained in natural science. It was explained there [that is, in natural science] that man is political by nature, and it was explained in political science that all isolation is evil. But it is only evil as such; accidentally, it may be good, which

happens with reference to many things pertaining to nature. For instance, bread and meat are by nature beneficial and nourishing, while opium and colocynth are mortal poisons. But the body may possess certain unnatural states in which the latter two are beneficial [79] and must be employed, and the natural nourishment is harmful and must be avoided. However, such states are necessarily diseases and deviations from the natural order. Hence the drugs are beneficial in exceptional cases and by accident, while [natural] nourishment is beneficial in the main and essentially. These states are to the body as the ways of life are to the soul. Just as health is believed to be one in opposition to these many [diseased] states, and health alone is the natural state of the body while the many [diseased states] are deviations from nature; similarly the lasting way of life is the natural state of the soul and is one in opposition to the rest of the ways of life, which are many, and these many [ways of life] are not natural to the soul.

38. Reading *yakūn* for *takūn*.